

## Thought for the day:

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April

The passage from Morning Prayer that I have chosen for today is from Hebrews 12:3-13...

<sup>3</sup>Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart. <sup>4</sup>In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. <sup>5</sup>And you have forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as children—  
“My child, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,  
or lose heart when you are punished by him;  
<sup>6</sup>for the Lord disciplines those whom he loves,  
and chastises every child whom he accepts.”  
<sup>7</sup>Endure trials for the sake of discipline. God is treating you as children; for what child is there whom a parent does not discipline? <sup>8</sup>If you do not have that discipline in which all children share, then you are illegitimate and not his children. <sup>9</sup>Moreover, we had human parents to discipline us, and we respected them. Should we not be even more willing to be subject to the Father of spirits and live? <sup>10</sup>For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share his holiness. <sup>11</sup>Now, discipline always seems painful rather than pleasant at the time, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.  
<sup>12</sup>Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, <sup>13</sup>and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed.

### Reflection

I wonder if you have ever been in a situation with young people, maybe a walk or shopping. It is quite common to hear a, ‘Keep up!’ being yelled, to which the reply comes, ‘It’s all right for you, you have long legs!’ or some such phrase. It is a common reaction in adversity – it’s all very well for you... and then the list comes of the other person’s advantages. It is often common for many to think of God in that way. ‘It’s all right for you, God – away from our suffering. How on earth can you understand how we feel?’ At Christmas, we celebrate Emmanuel – with us is God. The person of Jesus Christ was both fully human and fully God – just how that is the case makes my head spin, but there it is. We might feel that God doesn’t understand our suffering but in truth he completely understands. As Jesus suffered, the Godhead suffered.

The writer to the Hebrews starts with a reflection that Jesus did suffer. In chapter 4 of the same letter we read, ‘For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet he did not sin.’ God knows and understands but also wants us to learn and grow from such experiences. Much of this passage talks of learning; seeing God at work in us in the situations he allows us to face. We might be in a life trial where we make mistakes and, if we are willing and humble, God can use our reflection to build us for a better future.

In these current times, many people are talking about what life will be like when the coronavirus crisis is all over. There are many discussions, I am sure, taking place as to how humans are reacting to the crisis and I hope that there will be some positive outcomes from such reflections. In a way, I hope that we will never be the same again – by this, I mean that as humans we will use this hardship to examine what it means to be human. I hope that the cleaner air and quieter skies will give us added impetus to increase our environmental efforts.

Verses 12 and 13 address spiritual posture – so to speak. Are we going to allow this crisis to bend us over spiritually and limp our way through this? Or do we give all things to God in prayer and worship, asking of him the question, repeatedly, ‘How do you want me to grow and learn in this current crisis? How can I grow closer to you in all this?’

Let it be one of our prayers, that God’s Holy Spirit will be allowed to mould us and shape us throughout this crisis and that we emerge upright and strong – in him, who is our rock and our redeemer.

I close today’s reflection with a prayer from the Church of England website:

God of compassion,  
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.  
In their loneliness, be their consolation;  
in their anxiety, be their hope;  
in their darkness, be their light;  
through him who suffered alone on the cross, but  
reigns with you in glory,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**